

Message Text

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TAGS: EAID, UN, TCDC
SUBJECT: UN CONFERENCE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, BUENOS AIRES, AUG 30 TO SEPT 12, 1978 --
FINAL WRAP-UP REPORT

1. SUMMARY: THE UN CONFERENCE ON TCDC ENDED SEPT 12,
ONE-HALF DAY EARLY. THE US ACHIEVED ITS MAJOR OBJECTIVES
WHICH WERE TO PRESENT A POSITIVE, HELPFUL, AND FORTH-
COMING POSTURE TOWARDS TCDC; PREVENT THE CONFERENCE
FROM ADDRESSING BROAD ECONOMIC COOPERATION ISSUES;
PREVENT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL OVERVIEW COMMITTEE FOR
TCDC FROM CHANGING THE CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION OF
THE UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM'S (UNDP) GOVERNING COUNCIL,
AND AVOID THE CREATION OF A TCDC FUND. THE CONFERENCE
WAS FREE OF HARSH POLITICAL SQUABBLES AND MAINTAINED
AN AIR OF NEAR UNIVERSAL CAMARADERIE AND SERIOUSNESS OF
PURPOSE. THE POLITICAL POSTURINGS THAT DID OCCUR --
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BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAEL, THE PRC AND THE USSR, AND
THE AFRICANS AGAINST THE COMORO ISLANDS -- WERE WELL
CONTAINED AND DID NOT AFFECT THE SMOOTH PROGRESS OF
THE CONFERENCE. PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCE
ACHIEVED ITS INTENDED PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING A
FAVORABLE US ATTITUDE TOWARDS TCDC AND THE CONFERENCE.
A DETAILED NON-POLEMICAL DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION DESIGNED

TO IMPLEMENT THE CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES WAS ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS, WITH NO RESERVATIONS BY ANY DELEGATION. NEGOTIATIONS WERE LONG AND TOUGH BUT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS ALWAYS NON-CONFRONTATIONAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE.

2. US OBJECTIVES: THE KEY US OBJECTIVES WERE: (A) TO DISPEL G-77 SCEPTICISM ABOUT THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES' INTEREST IN TCDC; (B) TO KEEP THE CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND OUT OF SUCH UNCTAD-TYPE MATTERS AS TARIFF BARRIERS, TERMS OF TRADE, AND DEBT RELIEF; AND (C) TO PREVENT THE G-77 FROM CREATING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL OVERVIEW MECHANISM THAT WOULD BE EQUAL TO OR THE EFFECTIVE SUCCESSOR OF THE PRESENT 48-MEMBER UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL; (D) TO AVOID THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL FUND FOR TCDC. WE ACHIEVED ALL FOUR.

3. MOOD OF THE CONFERENCE: AN AIR OF PURPOSEFUL CONCENTRATION ON THE SUBSTANTIVE WORK AT HAND, AND AN ABSENCE OF POLITICAL RHETORIC AND DEVISIVE NATIONAL AGENDAS, PERVADED THE ENTIRE CONFERENCE. THIS MOOD REINFORCES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE G-77 COUNTRIES ARE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS CONFERENCE IN A WAY THEY WERE NOT IN SOME PREVIOUS WORLD CONFERENCES IN WHICH THE WEST HAD A MUCH GREATER STAKE. THE LAVISH ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY

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AND FLAWLESS LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONFERENCE CERTAINLY CONTRIBUTED TO ITS ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

4. PROBLEM OF BOARD ECONOMIC ISSUES: THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE FEATURED AN ATTEMPT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MAIN COMMITTEE (DR. ABDEL-MEGUID, MINISTER OF PLANNING - EGYPT) TO HAVE THE PLAN OF ACTION INCLUDE STRONG SUPPORT FOR AN LDC CABAL ON BROAD ECONOMIC ISSUES (E.G., DEBT RELIEF, TERMS OF TRADE, AND TARIFF BARRIERS) WHICH ARE OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF TCDC AND MORE PROPERLY ADDRESSED IN UNCTAD AND OTHER FORA. US DELEGATES HAD OCCASION TO LUNCH WITH ABDEL-MEGUID DURING THE FIRST WEEKEND AND VIGOROUSLY ARGUED AGAINST HIS STAND BY STRESSING THE DANGERS OF LOSING WIDESPREAD WESTERN SUPPORT FOR TCDC IF HE TRIED TO ENCUMBER IT WITH BROADER AND MORE CONTROVERSIAL ECONOMIC ISSUES. ABDEL-MEGUID BACKED OFF AND THE ISSUE NEVER AROSE AGAIN AS A NEGOTIATING PROBLEM.

5. POLITICAL ISSUES: THE ONLY POLITICAL DISPUTES IN THE CONFERENCE OCCURRED WHEN THE ARABS WALKED OUT ON ISRAEL'S PLENARY SPEECH; LIBYA ATTACKED "THE ZIONIST

ENTITY" WHEN THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT WAS ADOPTED; THE AFRICANS WALKED OUT ON THE COMOROS; THE CHINESE AND THE SOVIETS TRADED BRICKBATS AND SQUABBLED OVER THE TEXT OF THE RAPPORTEUR-GENERAL'S REPORT OF THE PLENARY DEBATE; AND GUINEA-BISSAU UPBRAIDED SPAIN IN ITS PLENARY SPEECH. NONE OF THESE DISPUTES AFFECTED THE SUBSTANTIVE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

6. THE PLENARY: IN A REMARKABLE DISPLAY OF PROCEDURAL EFFICIENCY AND SERIOUSNESS OF EFFORT, THE PLENARY DEBATE MOVED ALONG STEADILY IN A GENERALLY CONSTRUCTIVE FASHION. THE POSITIVE TONE OF THE CONFERENCE EMERGED EARLY WHEN ARGENTINE PRESIDENT VIDELA ADDRESSED THE PLENARY AND ANNOUNCED ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL UNCLASSIFIED

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NATIONAL FUND FOR TCDC. PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCE, WHICH THE US REPRESENTATIVE READ ALOUD, ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS AMBIANCE. MANY KEY DELEGATES COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON THE PLANS TO ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION.

THE GENERAL DEBATE ON THE CONCEPT OF TCDC WHICH GRADUALLY UNFOLDED DISPLAYED A PRONOUNCED TREND TOWARD A MODERATE APPROACH TO TCDC (I.E., NO NEW MACHINERY OR SPECIAL FUND); DEEMPHASIS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN

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TCDC AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
(ECDC); AND REAFFIRMATION OF THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

THE COOPERATIVE ATMOSPHERE IN THE PLENARY CONTRIBUTED
TO THE ULTIMATELY SUCCESSFUL INFORMAL BACKSTAGE EFFORTS
TO WORK OUT A PLAN OF ACTION WHICH THE CONFERENCE COULD
ENDORSE BY CONSENSUS.

7. THE MAIN COMMITTEE'S DIFFICULTIES: THE MAIN COMMITTEE
(MC), COMPRISING ALL COUNTRY DELEGATIONS, WAS TO REFINED
THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR ULTIMATE APPROVAL BY THE
PLENARY. THE MC SOON FOUND PROGRESS IMPOSSIBLE IN
THE ABSENCE OF G-77 DECISIONS ON ITS DESIDERATEA. THE
MC THEREFORE CONVOKED A SMALLER WORKING GROUP (WG) TO
EDIT AND REDRAFT THE PLAN'S INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT
OF OBJECTIVES WHILE THE G-77 DELIBERATED ON THE 38
DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SECRETARIAT PAPER. ONCE
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THE G-77 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS BEGAN TO EMERGE, THE
WG WORKED THEM OVER IN ALL-NIGHT SESSIONS FOR ULTIMATE
PRESENTATION TO THE MC.

CONCURRENTLY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE, GENERAL
POZZO, CONVENED WHAT BECAME A CHIEF-OF-DELEGATION
CONTACT GROUP EMBRACING THE G-77 AND EASTERN EUROPE FRG
AND DUTCH, PLUS THE US AND PRC. INITIALLY, POZZO USED
THE GROUP TO URGE G-77 AND WG PROGRESS, BUT LATER
NEGOTIATED THE SINGLE TOUGHEST ITEM IN THE CONFERENCE,
THE QUESTION OF AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL OVERSIGHT MECHANISM
FOR TCDC WITHIN THE UN SYSEM. THE G-77 WANTED A 149-
NATION UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL THAT WOULD REPORT DIRECTLY
TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND WOULD EXPAND THE CURRENT
48-MEMBER UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL. THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LED BY THE US, FIRMLY RESISTED THIS CHANGE BECAUSE IT
WOULD HAVE POLITICIZED THE UNDP AND SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED
DONOR COUNTRY SUPPORT.

AFTER AN ALL-NIGHT BARGAINING SESSION, THE POZZO
GROUP REACHED AGREEMENT ON A SOLUTION WHICH MAINTAINED

THE INTEGRITY OF THE UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL. THE MC AND ULTIMATELY THE PLENARY ACCEPTED THE DECISION.

8. CREDENTIALS: THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY THE CREDENTIALS OF THE 101 COUNTRIES WHO HAD SUBMITTED PROPER PAPERS, AND ACCEPTED THE REST PROVISIONALLY, PENDING ULTIMATE RECEIPT OF PROPERLY SIGNED CREDENTIALS. NIGERIA AND THE SEYCHELLES (SITTING IN FOR ABSENT MADAGASCAR) RESERVED THEIR POSITIONS ON THE COMOROS; THE USSR REITERATED ITS RESERVATIONS FROM THE 32ND UNGA ON CHILE; AND THE PRC RESERVED ITS POSITION ON THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, CLAIMING THAT NORTH UNCLASSIFIED

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KOREA WAS THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF LL THE KOREAN PEOPLE. THE US STATED THAT THESE QUESTIONS WERE OUTSIDE THE PURVIEW OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEES.

WHEN THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE PRESENTED ITS REPORT TO THE PLENARY, THE LIBYANS RAISED A STORM "ON BEHALF OF ALL THE ARAB STATES" ABOUT "THAT ZIONIST ENTITY". THE ISRAELI REPLIED THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO RESPOND BECAUSE THE LIBYANS HAD NOT NAMED ANY COUNTRY, AND BESIDES THIS QUESTIONS HAD NOT COME UP IN THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE. THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT SUPPORTED THE ISRAELIES AND THE PLENARY THEREUPON ACCEPTED THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT WITHOUT RESERVATION. IN THE FINAL SESSION OF THE PLENARY, MINUTES BEFORE THE CONFERENCE WAS TO ADJOURN, THE ISRAELI SPOKE AGAIN IN A LOW-KEY MANNER, IN DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY. (ISRAELI AMBASSADOR RAM NIRGAD GREATLY APPRECIATED US REPRESENTATIVE'S SUPPORT AND ADVICE ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES.)

9. REPRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE: REPRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE INCLUDED 138 COUNTRIES, WITH OVER 50 HEADS OF DELEGATION AT CABINET LEVEL; 3 NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, BUT NOT THE PLO; 1 SPECIAL INVITEE, THE WEST INDIAN ASSOCIATED STATES; 16 UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES; 20 SEPARATE ENTITIES OF THE UN; 25 INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS; AND 50 NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. OVER 150 DELEGATES SPOKE IN THE PLENARY SESSIONS.

10. US INITIATIVE ON PLAN OF ACTION: THE US SUGGESTED AMENDING THE DRAFT PLAN TO CALL FOR COLLABORATION AMONG PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TECHNICAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON COMMON PROBLEMS. WE HOPED: (A) TO REINFORCE TCDC BY PROVIDING A HANDLE FOR US AND OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRY SUPPORT; (B) TO OFFSET DRAFT PLAN'S FOCUS ON GOVERNMENTAL AND UN INSTITUTIONS; AND (C) TO REINFORCE PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE WITH SPECIFIC POSITIVE US

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CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONFERENCE'S WORK. IN THE DRAFTING SESSIONS THE G-77 INDICATED THAT, THOUGH IT APPRECIATED OUR MAKING A CONTRIBUTION, IT WISHED TO DILUTE THE LANGUAGE. INFORMALLY SOME MEMBERS EXPRESSED THE FEAR THAT US INSTITUTIONS MIGHT DOMINATE THEIR INSTITUTIONS.

11. MEDIA REACTION: THE WORLD PRESS DESCENDED ON BUENOS AIRES TO REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE. APPROXIMATELY 400 JOURNALISTS WERE REGISTERED. THE ARGENTINE PRESS AS WELL AS LOCAL RADIO AND TV STATIONS WERE ESPECIALLY ACTIVE IN HIGHLIGHTING THE DAILY EVENTS OF THE CONFERENCE. BY AND LARGE, THE ARGENTINE REPORTING HAS BEEN STRAIGHT-FORWARD WITH LITTLE EDITORIAL COMMENT.

ALL LOCAL NEWSPAPERS COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE AND SOME RAN THE TWHOLE TEXT.

THE US PLENARY SPEECH RECEIVED MAJOR LOCAL COVERAGE AND THE PRESS WAS PLEASED WITH ITS CONTENT. THE JAMAICAN REPRESENTATIVE (SPOKESMAN FOR THE G-77) LAUDED THE US STATEMENT IN A PRESS CONFERENCE, BUT

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SAID "IT DIDN'T GO FAR ENOUGH."

12. PARALLEL MEETINGS ON ARGENTINE TECHNOLOGY: THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE CONFERENCE SPONSORED AN EXTENSIVE SERIES OF PARALLEL MEETINGS TO PRESENT TO OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARGENTINA'S TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS. THE TOPICS WERE TECHNOLOGY, CONSULTANTSHIP, FINANCING, AND HUMAN RESOURCES. IN ADDITION, THERE WAS A TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER WITH SOME 25 STANDS FROM SUCH INDUSTRIES AS TEXTILES, MILITARY FABRICATIONS, CHEMISTRY AND PETROLEUM, METALLURGY, FOOD PROCESSING, AERONAUTICS, AND ELECTRONICS.

CONVERSATIONS WITH ARGENTINS AT THE PARALLEL MEETINGS AND THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER REVEALED THEIR WISH FOR INCREASED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION WITH THE US TO AUGMENT THEIR EXISTING TECHNOLOGICAL BASE.
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13. ROLE OF UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES: THESE ORGANIZATIONS DID NOT PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION LARGELY BECAUSE THE G-77 AND THE CANADIANS INSISTED ON THEIR EXCLUSION FROM BOTH THE WORKING GROUP (WG) AND ITS SMALLER CONTACT GROUP. THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES INTEND TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THE UN SECRETARIAT TO PREVENT A RECURRENCE OF THIS PRACTICE. THE US DELEGATION CONSULTED FREQUENTLY AND INFORMALLY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS, AND BELIEVES THE WG'S DELIBERATIONS WOULD HAVE BENEFITED FROM THEIR PARTICIPATION.

14. WEO COORDINATION PROBLEM: UNFORTUNATELY, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES COULD NOT AGREE TO MEET TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVE APPROACHES. APPARENTLY, THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO SUCH DESIRABLE COORDINATION WAS A PRE-CONFERENCE, POLICY-LEVEL DECISION BY THE SCANDINAVIAN GOVERNMENTS TO AVOID GIVING EVEN THE APPEARANCE THAT THE WESTERN GROUP WAS TAKING OR ATTEMPTING A JOINT APPROACH TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONFERENCE'S WORK. THE PRINCIPAL CONCERN OF THOSE GOVERNMENTS, ACCORDING TO THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AT THE CONFERENCE, WAS TO AVOID A REPETITION OF THEIR EXPERIENCE IN MARCH IN NEW YORK AT THE SPECIAL MEETING WHICH UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH

UNIDO AS A SPECIALIZED AGENCY. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THEY ARE NOW RESOLVED TO FOLLOW "NEW YORK RULES" FOR WEO COORDINATION, WHICH ARE LIMITED TO PROCEDURAL MATTERS, AND NOT "GENEVA OR VIENNA RULES," WHICH ALLOW FOR SUBSTANTIVE COORDINATION. WHILE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A "STAND-OFFISH" POSTURE BY SOME OECD COUNTRIES DID NOT PROVE TO BE A SERIOUS HANDICAP IN ACHIEVING US GOALS AT THIS CONFERENCE; THE SAME WILL NOT BE TRUE WHEN THE UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MEETS NEXT YEAR. THE ISSUES THERE WILL WARRANT UNCLASSIFIED

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EXTREMELY CLOSE SUBSTANTIVE COORDINATION AMONG THE WESTERN COUNTRIES.

14. FUTURE ACTION:

(A) THE BUENOS AIRES PLAN OF ACTION WILL GO TO SECOND COMMITTEE OF UNGA FOR APPROVAL, PROBABLY IN NOVEMBER. WE RECOMMEND THAT USDEL SUPPORT PLAN AT THAT TIME BUT BE ALERT TO G-77 MOVES TO EXPAND UNDP GC MEMBERSHIP.

(B) US SHOULD MONITOR PRESENT UNDP TCDC UNIT IN ORDER TO INSURE ITS EXPANSION DOES NOT GET OUT OF HAND.

(C) USREP RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT ANDUSUN CONSIDER MOUNTING A CAMPAIGN TO INSURE THAT NY WEO MODEL DOES NOT APPLY TO GLOBAL CONFERENCES HELD OUTSIDE OF NY. AT TCDC CONFERENCE THERE WAS NO WEO GROUP COMMUNICATION EXCEPT FOR ONE 15-MINUTE INFORMAL, STAND-UP GATHERING BEHIND THE BACK STAIRS OF THE CONFERENCE HALL. IF THIS MODEL IS APPLIED TO NEXT UN WORLD CONFERENCE IN VIENNA IN AUGUST, 1978, (UN CONFERENCE ON S&T FOR DEVELOPMENT), THE RESULTS WILL BE MOST UNFORTUNATE. WE ARE NOT PUSHING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL GROUP POSITIONS BUT ONLY URGING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DELEGATIONS.

(D) USREP WOULD APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH DCC TO BRIEF THEM ON THIS TCDC CONFERENCE. AT THAT TIME WOULD PLAN TO PROPOSE, FOR DCC CONSIDERATION, SOME SPECIFIC ACTIONS, WHICH IF ADOPTED, WOULD ENABLE US TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO TCDC CONCERNS OF THIRD WORLD.
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